

REMARKS

The Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's finding that claims 7, 8, 19, 20, 22, and 23 are allowable. Claims 7, 8, 19, and 22 have been amended in order to overcome the remaining objections to these claims. The remaining claims, claims 1-6, 9-18, 21, 24 and 25, have been canceled pursuant to the amendments presented herein, although the Applicants respectfully reserve their rights to pursue such claims in a continuing application.

The present reply cancels all of the rejected claims in the present application and complies with the requirements set forth in the final Office Action in order to overcome objections as to form. In view of this, the present response is believed to comply with 37 CFR 1.113, and the Applicants therefore respectfully request entry of this Amendment After Final and consideration of the present application as amended herein.

Objections to the Claims

Claims 7-8, 19-20, and 22-23 were objected to as being dependent upon rejected claims. The Applicants have amended claims 7, 8, 19, and 22 in order to correct this informality, and these claims now incorporate the limitations of the claims from which they depend. The Applicants therefore respectfully request that the objection to claims 7-8, 19-20, and 22-23 be withdrawn.

Provisional Non-Statutory Double Patenting

Claims 1-5 and 9 were provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting in view of claims 1-9 and 12 of U.S. Patent No. 6,770,638. Claims 1-5 and 9 have been canceled, making this ground of rejection moot. In view of this, the Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1-5 and 9 on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting be withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-6, 9, and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over International Patent Publication No. WO 03/011396 to Fick. Claims 1-6, 9, and 24 have been canceled, making this ground of rejection moot. In view of this, the Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1-6, 9, and 24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Conclusion

The Applicants believe that all pending claims in the present application are in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is thus respectfully requested. If, however, there remain any issues which can be addressed by telephone, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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